

# Limiting Nonresident Participation in General Season Deer and Elk Hunts

Presented to the Idaho Fish and Game Commission, Nov. 2020



# Overview



- Limiting NRs in general season deer and elk hunts
  - Elk Zones, A and B tags – uncapped zones
  - Deer by tag type – and by Game Management Unit
    - ✦ Regular deer tag
    - ✦ White-tailed deer tag
  - Recommendations – Implementation of limits on sliding scale
- Allocation of tags to Outfitted hunters
  - Statutory and Administrative Rule Authority
  - Recommendations for allocation



# Part 1: Limiting NR Participation



# Issue Description



- Resident hunters increasingly concerned about congestion
  - Number of NR hunters in general season deer and elk hunts.
- Number of NR general season deer and elk tags is limited -- set by administrative rule.
  - Number has changed little in 30 years
    - ✦ 12,815 elk tags
    - ✦ 15,500 total deer tags

# Issue Description



- NR tag quotas don't affect distribution of hunters.
  - some units or zones have a disproportionately high % of NR hunters.
- Commission & IDFG have not had the ability to manage the distribution of NR hunters in general season hunts.
  - Some popular units and zones have a very high % NR hunters (e.g., even exceeding the number of resident hunters)
  - Other units or zones have a low % NR hunters.

# Management of NR Opportunity



- Idaho Code §36-103 declares that all wildlife are property of the state and shall be preserved, protected, perpetuated, and managed, and shall only be taken at such times or places, under conditions, means or manner as will preserve, protect, and perpetuate such wildlife, and *provide for the citizens of this state and, as by law permitted to others,* continued supplies of wildlife for hunting, fishing, and trapping.

# Nonresidents Limited in CHs



## **Controlled Hunts**

- Commission has limited NRs in controlled hunts for decades (max of 10% drawn at random).
- Commission granted authority in 2018 to manage participation level of NR hunters in unlimited controlled hunts to no less than 10% of the Average # of tags drawn annually in previous 5 yrs.

# Nonresidents Limited in Elk Zones



## **Elk Zones – A and B tags**

- 1998 Elk zones management – A/B tags & Cap participation in general season as alternative to CHs.
  - Number of resident hunters, nonoutfitted nonresidents, and outfitted residents/nonresident limited in proportion to their participation in prev 5 yrs.
  - In rare cases # of nonoutfitted nonresident tags exceeds resident tags (Lolo and Selway A tags).



# Nonresidents Limited in Elk Zones



## **Elk Zones – A and B tags**

- 2013-- Commission authority to reduce # nonoutfitted nonresident tags in capped zones to not less than 25% of the tags
  - Diamond Creek A tag 2015 (35%) and 2020 (25%) and Salmon B tag (25%)

# New Authority in 2020 – General Seasons



## ***IDAPA 13.01.08.255.01 Nonresident Tag Limitations.***

- ***d.*** *In general hunts, the Commission may limit by proclamation the number of tags available for nonresident hunters in a zone or big game hunting unit to no less than ten percent (10%) of the average hunter participation estimated for that zone or unit during the previous five (5) year period.*

# New tools: Percent NR by Elk Zone



## Tag Use Thresholds Elk - A Tag



We used estimates of mean resident and non-resident tag use during 2015-2019 for mule deer, white-tailed deer, and elk general hunts, to calculate the distribution of non-resident tag availability under a management system in which the number of non-resident tags are limited to 15% per unit. See the [Historical Estimates App](#) for historical estimates of total tag use.

We calculated the 15% threshold for non-resident tags as follows:

15% threshold = (Multi-Year Mean Total Non-Resident Tags + Multi-Year Mean Total Resident Tags) \* 0.15

Tag Type:

Elk - A Tag

Spatial Distribution:

☐ Unit ☒ Zone

Threshold (%):



Years:



Distribution of Tag Use

Change in Tag Use

Map



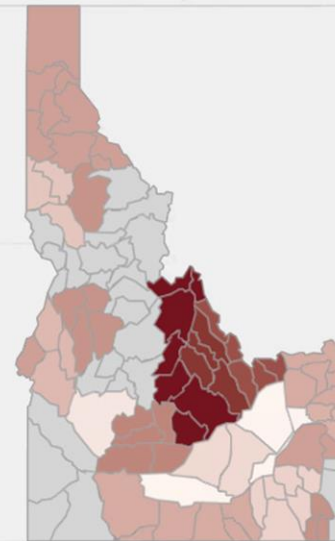
Current Percent



☒ Current Percent

☐ Percent Over Threshold

☐ Tags Over Threshold



# New tools: Percent NR by Elk Zone



## Tag Use Thresholds Elk - A Tag



15% threshold = (Multi-Year Mean Total Non-Resident Tags + Multi-Year Mean Total Resident Tags) \* 0.15

Tag Type:

Elk - A Tag

Spatial Distribution:

☐ Unit ☒ Zone

Threshold (%):



Years:



+

-



Current Percent



McCall

Resident Tags:

multi-year mean = 2180 ( $\pm 25$ )

Non-Resident Tags:

current percent = 16% ( $\pm 0.4\%$ )

multi-year mean = 400 ( $\pm 9$ )

tags at threshold = 387 ( $\pm 4$ )

tags over threshold = 13 ( $\pm 10$ )

percent over threshold = 3% ( $\pm 2.7\%$ )

Outfitted Tags:

Elk A Tags (2018) = 54

Elk Unknown Tags (2018) = 0

Elk A Tags (2019) = 74

Elk Unknown Tags (2019) = 0

Non-Outfitted Non-Resident tags at threshold = 313

☒ Current Percent

☐ Percent Over Threshold

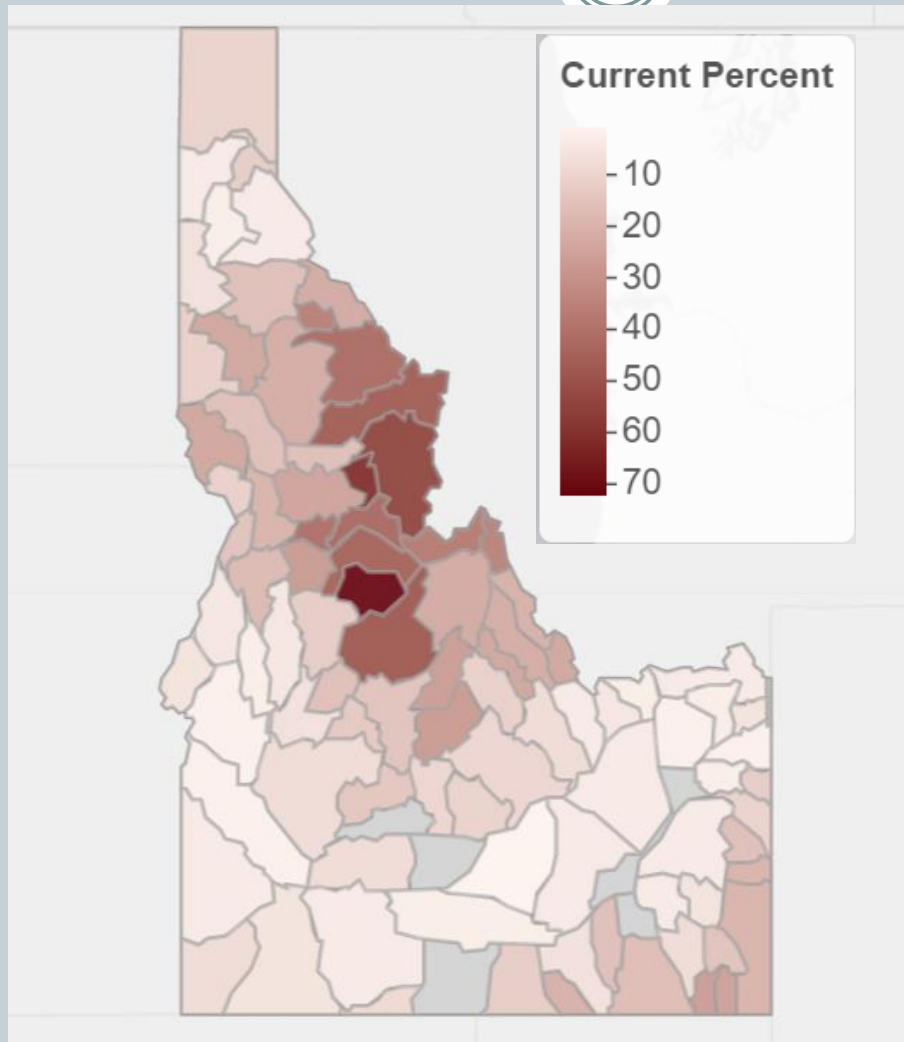
☐ Tags Over Threshold

MONTANA

Leaflet

Download Map

# New tools: % NR by Unit: Regular Deer Tag

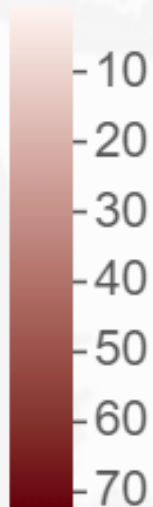




# New tools: % NR by Unit: Regular Deer



## Current Percent



### Unit 10A

#### Resident Tags:

multi-year mean = 492 ( $\pm 39$ ) tags

#### Non-Resident Tags:

current percent = 23% ( $\pm 3\%$ )

multi-year mean = 146 ( $\pm 19$ ) tags

tags at threshold = 95 ( $\pm 6$ ) tags

tags over threshold = 51 ( $\pm 20$ ) tags

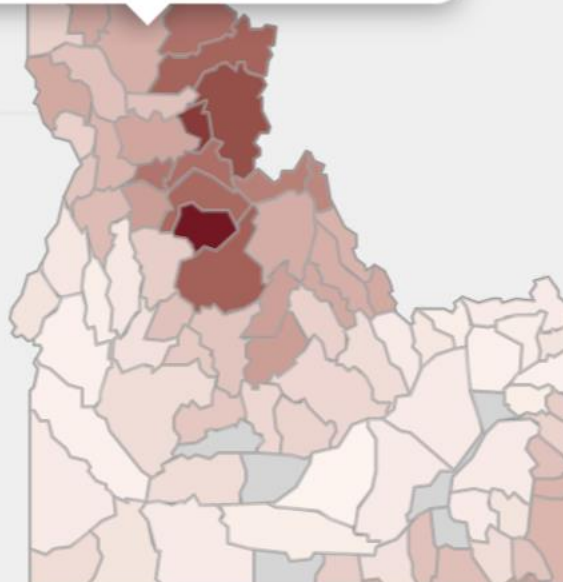
percent over threshold = 54% ( $\pm 21.6\%$ )

#### Outfitted Tags:

Tags (2018) = NA

Tags (2019) = NA

Non-Outfitted Non-Resident tags at threshold = NA



# Nonresident General Season Elk Tags



# NR Elk Tag Quota



## 12,815 general season elk tags

- Zones with capped A and/or B tags (2020)
  - 6 Zones w/ capped A tags: Lolo, Selway, Middle Fork, Elk City, Diamond Creek, Sawtooth.
  - 13 Zones w/ capped B tags: Lolo, Selway, Middle Fork, Dworshak, Elk City, Sawtooth, Salmon, Bear River, Weiser River, Pioneer, Smoky-Bennett, South Hills, Big Desert.
- Capped Zones each already have limits on NR tags
  - ✦ (max of 3,861 nonoutfitted NR tags + 1,918 outfitted tags in 2020 = up to 5,779 NR tags from quota)

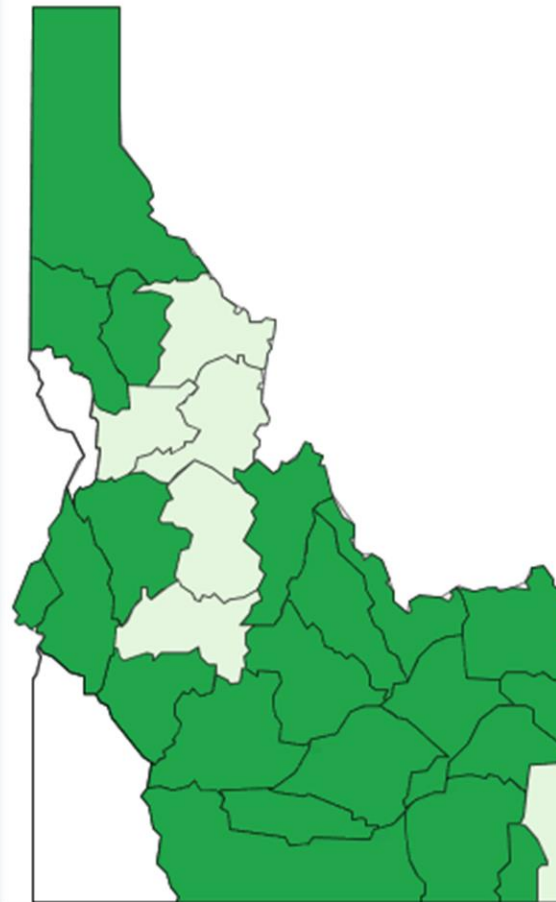
# NR Elk Tag Quota



- A tags in 20 zones and B tags in 6 Zones are not capped
- These uncapped zones are our focus today

# Uncapped Elk Zone A Tags

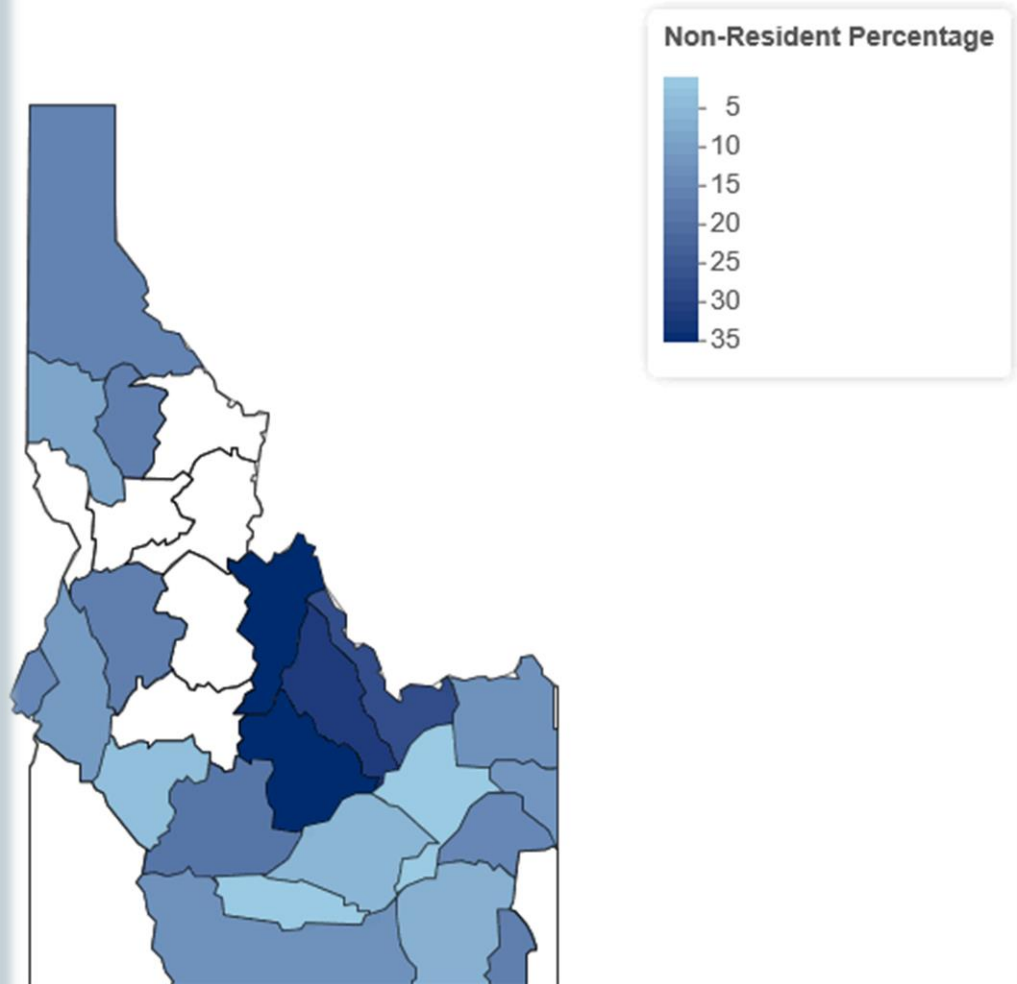
- 20 Zones have uncapped A tags
  - Pioneer, Salmon, Lemhi, Beaverhead, Smoky-Bennett, Bear River, Dworshak, McCall, Panhandle, Brownlee, Tex Creek, Island Park, South Hills, Palisades, Weiser River, Palouse, Bannock, Big Desert, Boise River, Snake River





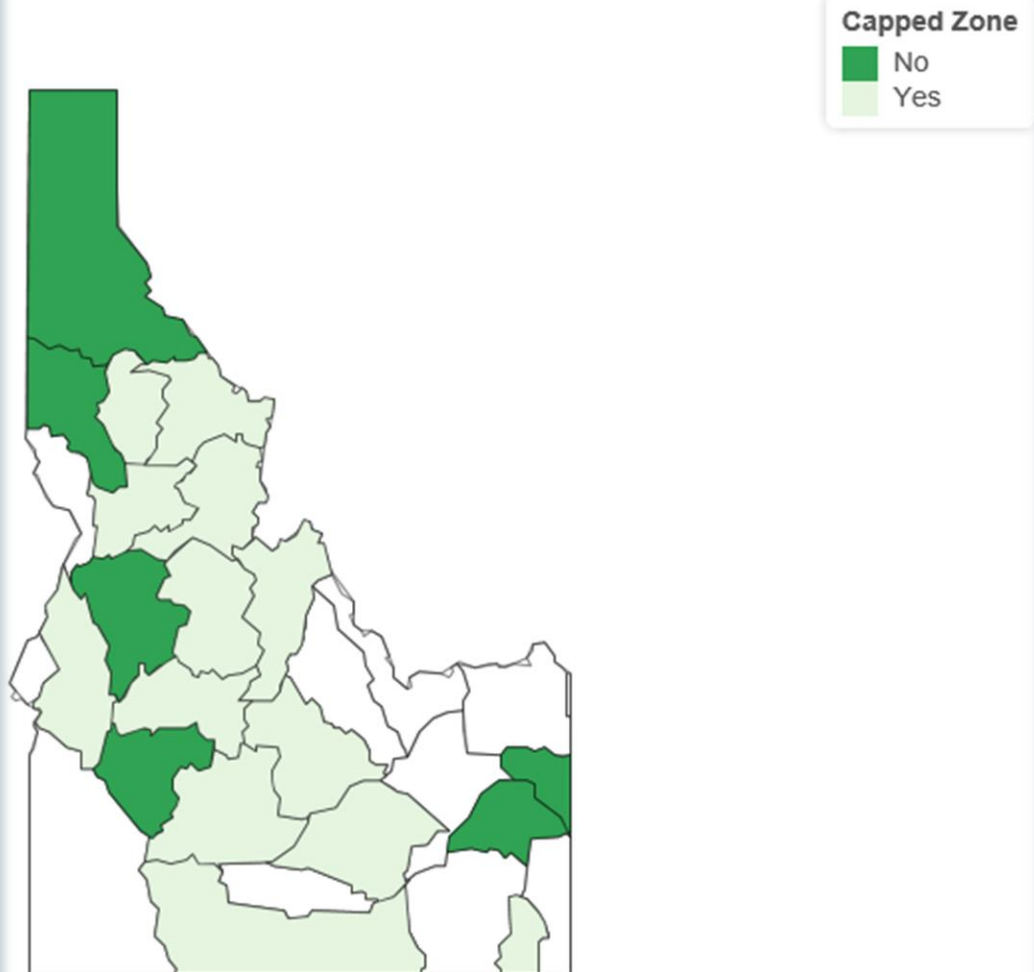
# Uncapped Elk Zone A Tags

- % Nonresidents in Elk Zones with uncapped A tags, averaged over last 5 years (2015 – 2019).



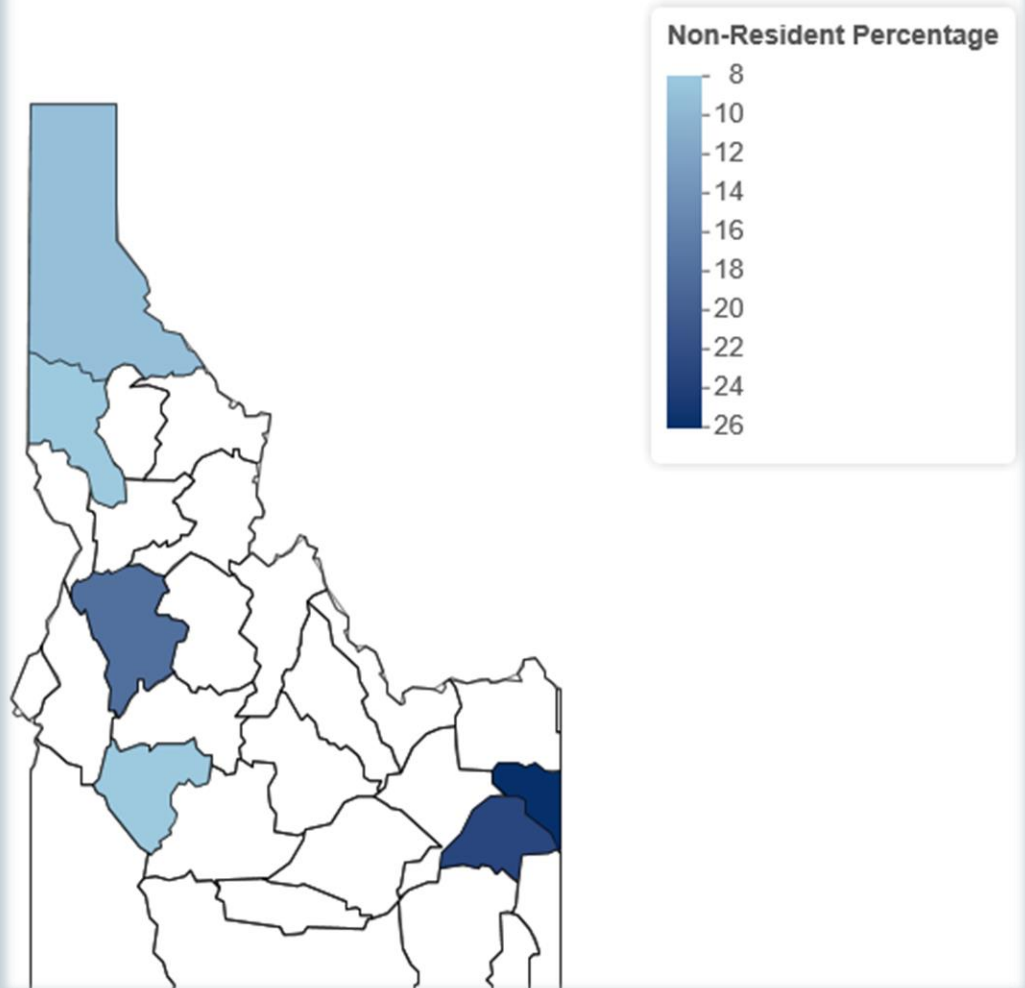
# Uncapped Elk Zone B Tags

- 6 Zones have uncapped B tags
  - Palisades, Tex Creek, McCall, Panhandle, Palouse, Boise River



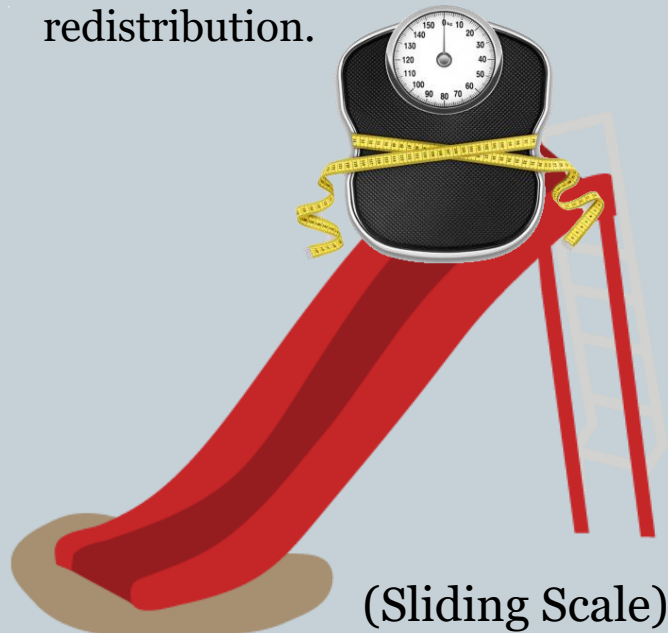
# Uncapped Elk Zone B Tags

- % Nonresidents in Elk Zones with uncapped B tags, averaged over last 5 years (2015 – 2019).



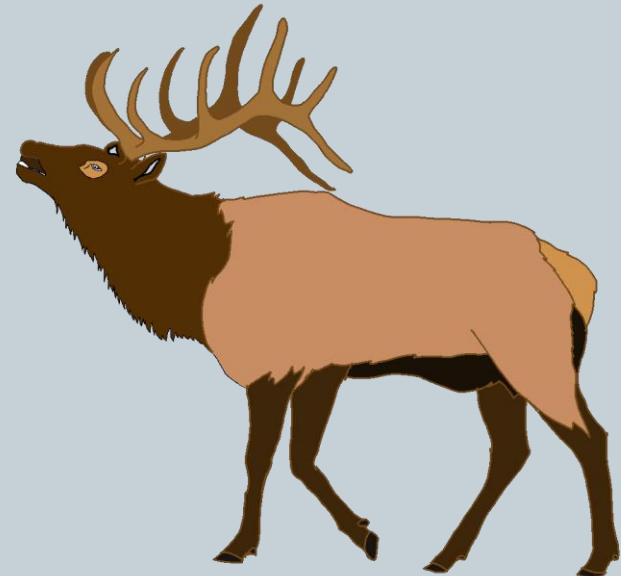
# Implementing Limits on NR Elk Zone A/B tags

- Evaluated range of options
  - Limit to 15% in all zones
  - Limit to 10% in all zones
  - Sliding scale based on 5 yr %.
    - Protects against major redistribution.

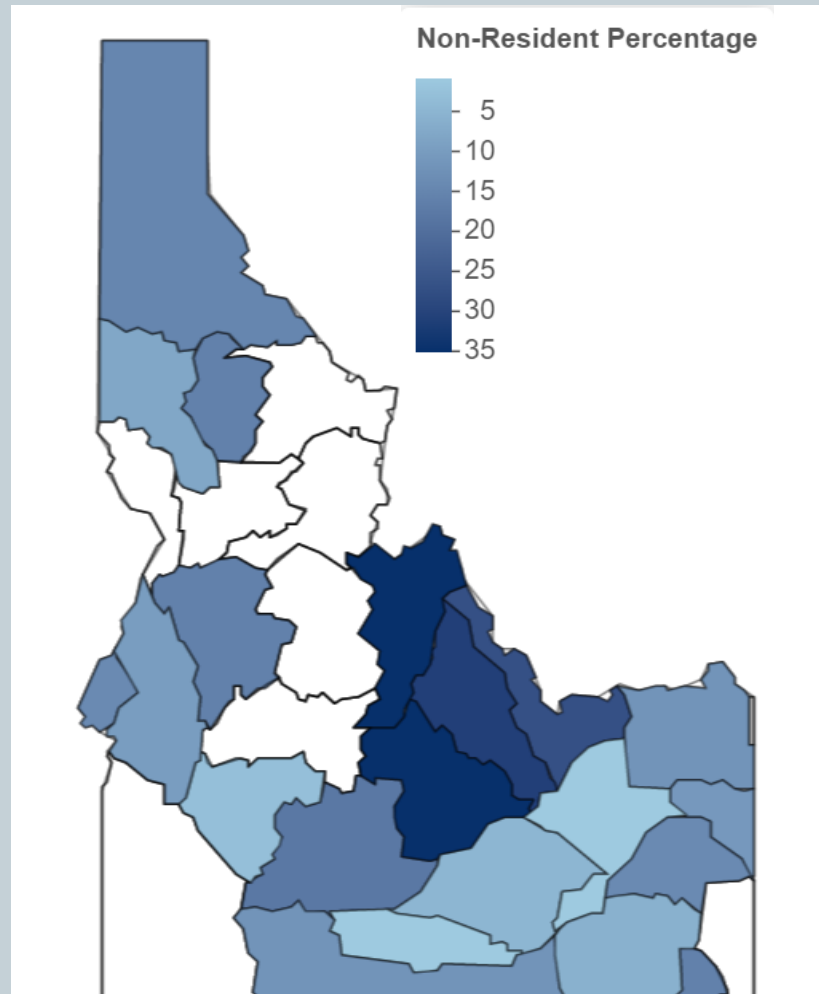


## 5yr average NR participation

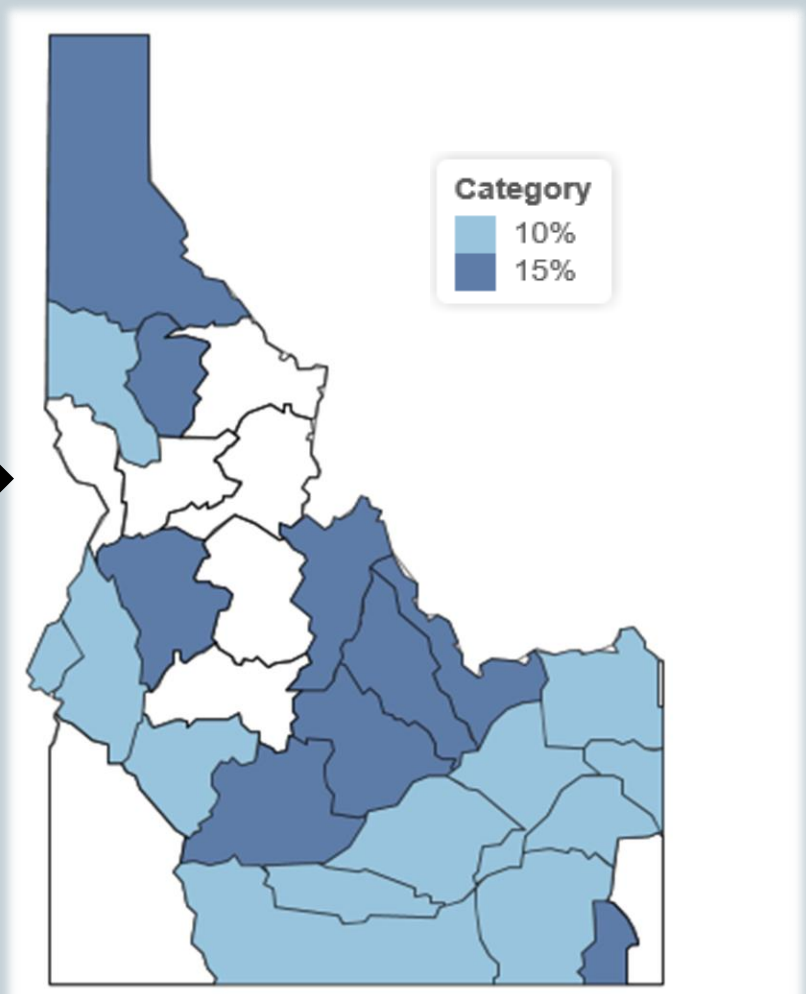
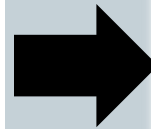
- $\geq 15\% = 15\%$
- $\geq 10\% \text{ -- } < 15\% = 10\%$
- $< 10\% = 10\%$



# Implementing Sliding Scale: A Tags



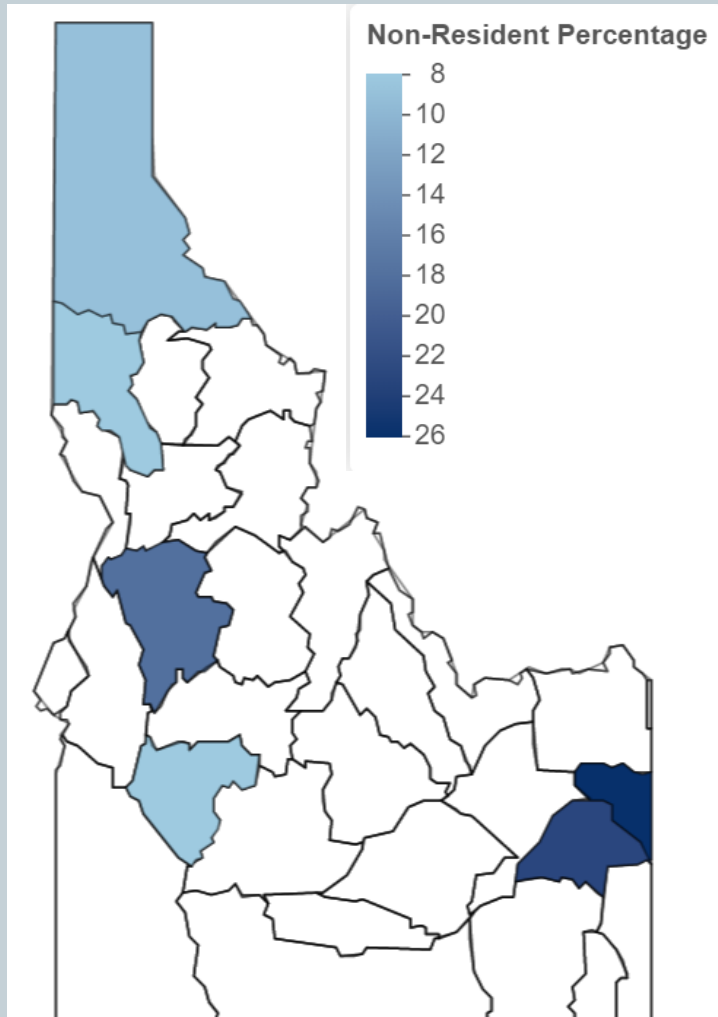
Before: 5 yr Average % NR



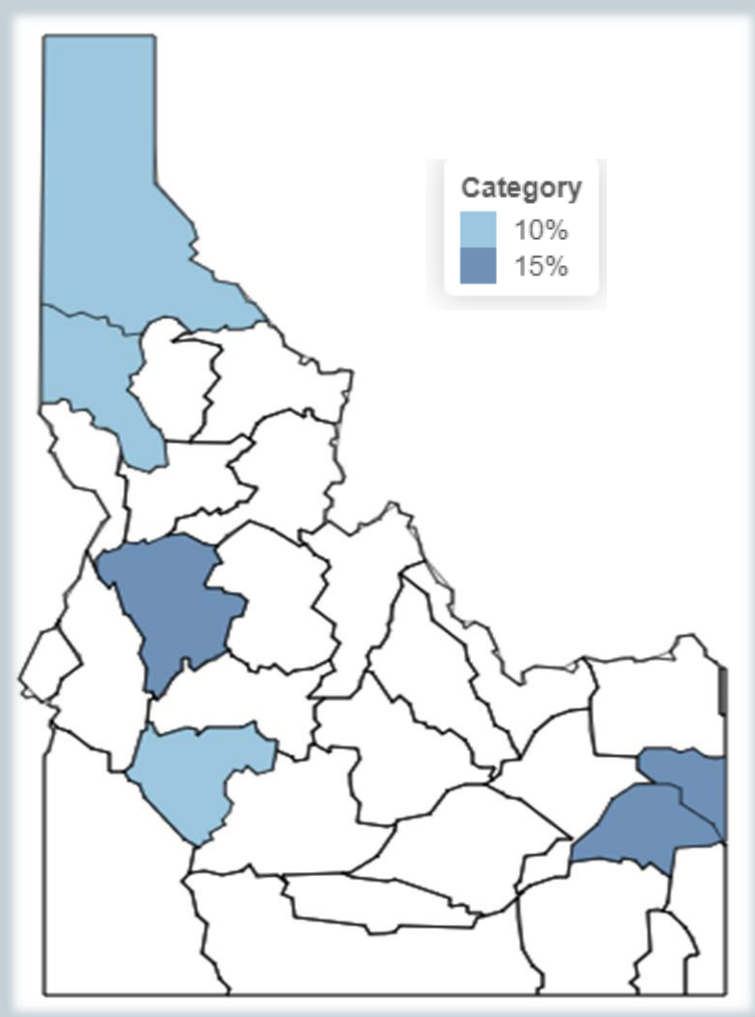
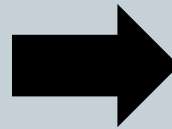
After (Table 1)



# Implementing Sliding Scale: B Tags



Before: 5 yr Average % NR



After (Table 2)

# Nonresident General Season Deer Tags

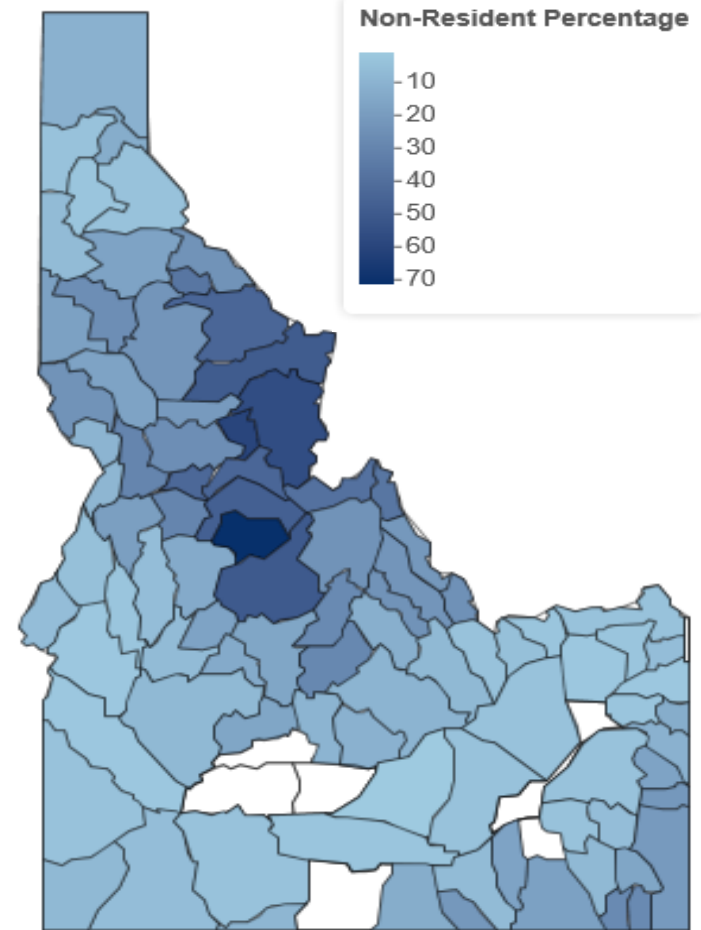


# NR deer tag quota



- 15,500 general season nonresident deer tags
  - 14,000 Regular or White-tailed deer tags
  - 1,500 White-tailed deer tags
- General season deer tags can currently be used in any unit with an open hunt
- 1,985 deer tags available in outfitter set-aside to allocate as either regular or white-tailed deer tags to outfitted hunters

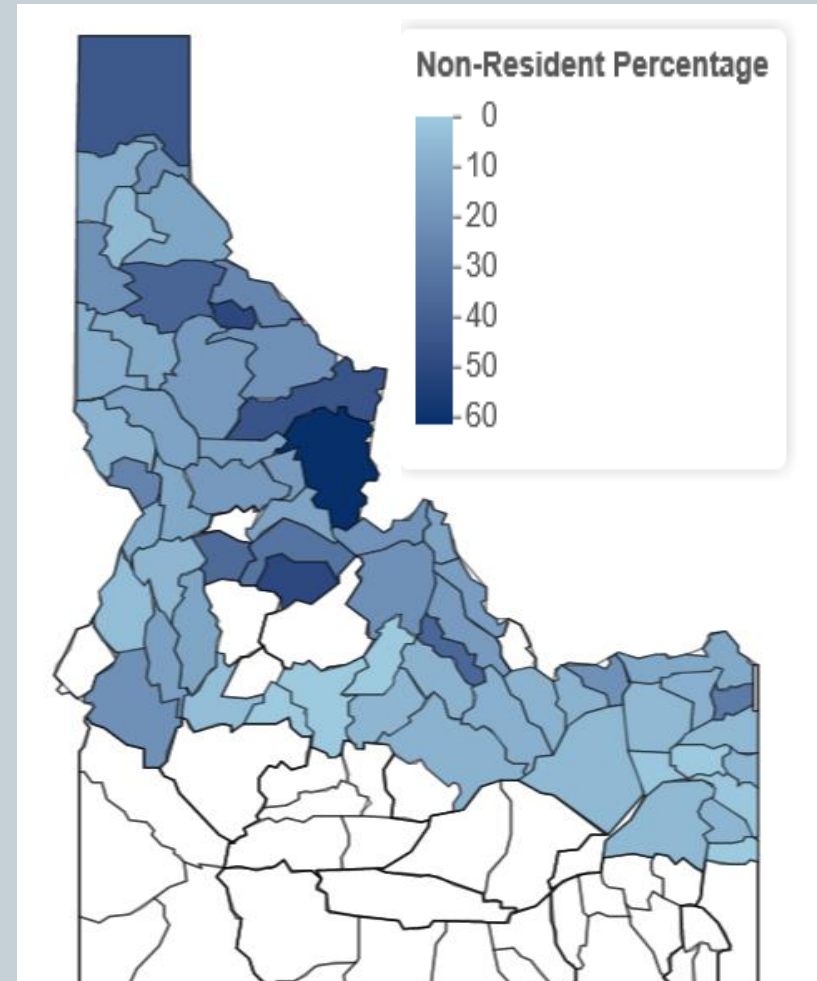
# Nonresident Regular Deer Tags



5yr Average % NR by Unit, 2015 - 2019



# Nonresident White-tailed Deer Tags

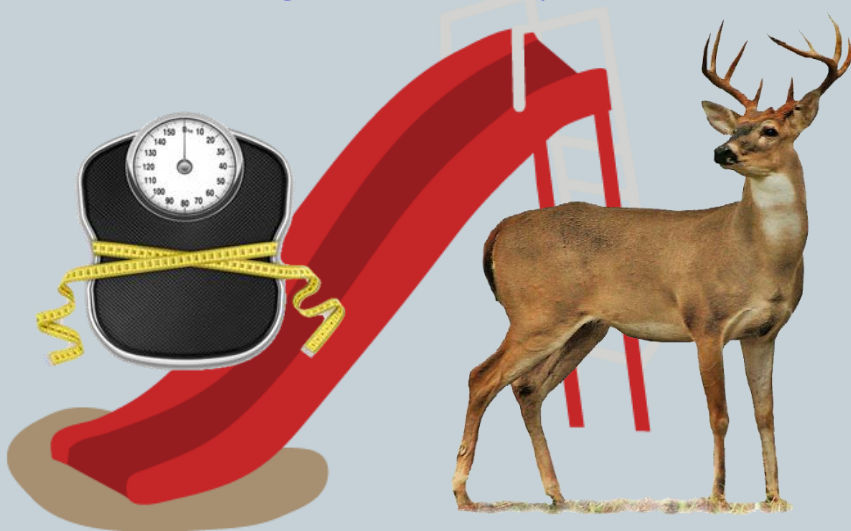


5yr Average % NR by Unit, 2015 - 2019



# Regular Deer Tag & White-tailed Deer Tag

- Evaluated range of options
  - Limit to 15% in all units
  - Limit to 10% in all units
  - Sliding scale based on 5yr %
    - Various scenarios
    - Protects against major redistribution
- NR deer tags valid in only one Unit

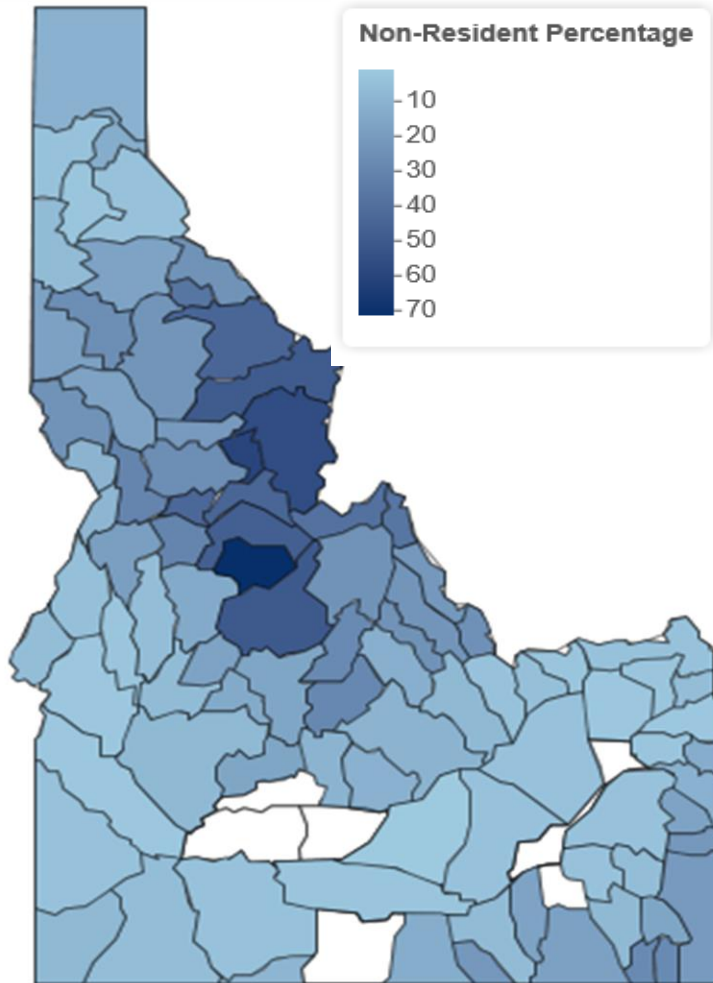


## 5yr average NR participation

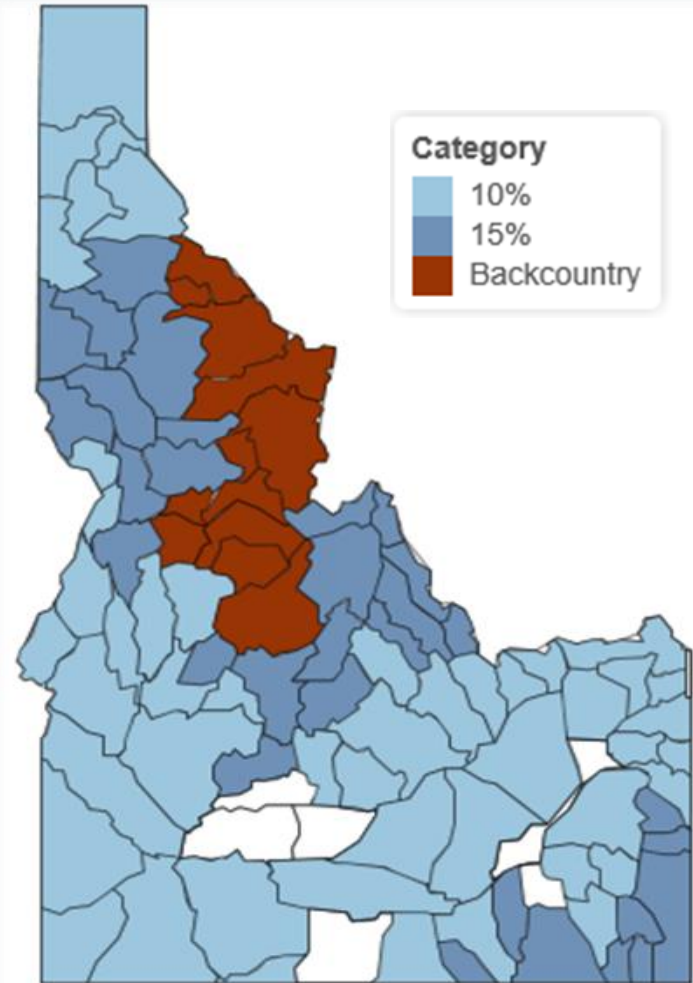
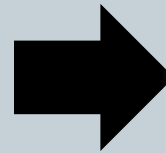
- $\geq 15\% = 15\%$
- $\geq 10\% \text{ -- } < 15\% = 10\%$
- $< 10\% = 10\%$
- Back country: status quo%



# Sliding Scale: NR Regular deer tags

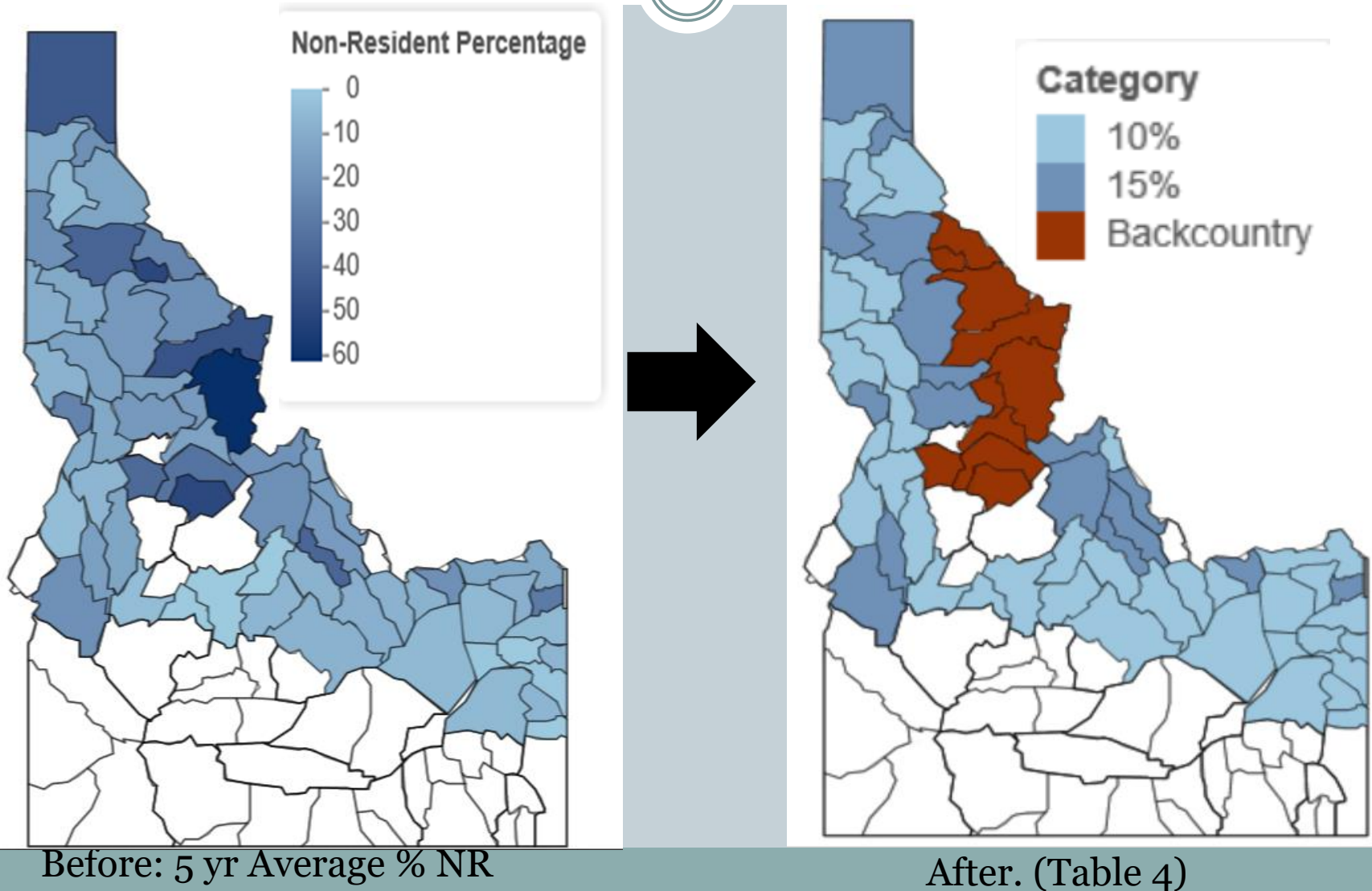


Before: 5 yr Average % NR



After. (Table 3)

# Sliding Scale: NR White-tailed deer tags





## Part 2: Outfitter Allocation



## Part 2: Outfitter Allocation



- IOGA developed legislation in 2019 (HB 192) and 2020 (HB 426) to protect outfitter interests when nonresident deer or elk hunts are restricted.
  - Improve tracking of outfitter use through IDFG licensing system.
  - Provides additional option to Commission for how they *may* choose to allocate tags for use by outfitted hunters.
  - Prescribes how IOGLB will distribute allocated tags to individual outfitters.

# Part 2: Outfitter Allocation



## Outfitter Set-aside:

- IC §36-408(3). When Commission limits NR deer or elk tags, it shall set aside a *maximum* of 25% of NR tag limit.
- IDAPA 13.01.04.500. Each year 1,985 deer tags and 2,400 elk (A or B tags) are set aside for sale to outfitted hunters.
  - Deer = 13% of total NR quota of 15,500 general season deer tags
  - Elk = 19% of total NR quota of 12,815 general season elk tags
  - Outfitter set-aside tags are a portion of the NR quotas– not in addition



# Part 2: Outfitter Allocation



## Allocation:

- When setting big game seasons, if the Commission limits # of deer or elk tags available in any unit or zone, the Commission *may* allocate a number of deer and elk tags from the outfitter set-aside tags for use by hunters that have entered into a signed agreement to use an outfitter (IC §36-408(4)).
- In capped hunts the Commission *may* allocate the number of outfitted hunter elk and deer tags based on the highest number within each of the last 2 years of all elk or deer tags using the service of an outfitter in each capped hunt.
  - (Elk zone by A/B tag or deer by Unit.)

## Part 2: Outfitter Allocation



### Allocation:

- Any additional tags may come from the outfitted hunter set-aside or the NR quota in the capped hunt, *not to exceed 50% of the nonresident quota for each capped hunt* (IC §36-408(4)).

# Part 2: Outfitter Allocation



- IDFG staff collaborated w/ IOGA leadership and IOGLB staff on statute and rule implementation and development of proposal over the last year
- Incorporated Outfitter use data received from IOGLB
  - Included all use in calculations, regardless of residency of hunter. That is, included outfitted resident hunters, which would not be limited by the proposal to place limits on NR tags.
  - Challenges— outfitters report hunter use by species, unit, and week of season.
    - ✦ Provided our best interpretation of information available in assigning use when in question, generally to the benefit of outfitters.

## Part 2: Outfitter Allocation



- Starting w/ 2021 tags sales moving forward, outfitted hunter use will be tracked by IDFG through license system.
  - ✦ Will know use by elk zone A/B tag and deer use type at unit level.

## Part 2: Outfitter Allocation: Elk Tags



- Of 2,400 elk tags set-aside for outfitted hunters, 1,918 tags are allocated to existing capped elk zone A and B tag hunts (2020 season levels) (IDAPA 13.01.04.505.01).
  - $2,400 - 1,918 = 482$  tags available to allocate in uncapped elk zone A and B tag hunts.
  - Calculated highest use in last 2 years for Elk zones for A and B tags,
    - A-tag zones: highest use = 547 hunters (Table 5)
    - B-tag zones: highest use = 272 hunters (Table 6)

## Part 2: Outfitter Allocation: Elk Tags



- Total high use in currently uncapped zone A/B tags = 819 tags
  - ✦ Exceeds 482 tags available to allocate
  - ✦  $482 \text{ tags available} \div 819 \text{ tags high use} = 58.8\%$
- *Sliding scale proposal for limiting nonresident tags covers ALL of elk high outfitter use, but there are not enough tags available in set-aside to cover all use.*



## Part 2: Outfitter Allocation: Deer Tags



- Deer tags:
  - 1,985 deer tags in the outfitter set-aside available to allocate as either regular deer tags or white-tailed deer tags
  - Calculated highest use in last 2 years for Regular deer tags and White-tailed deer tags

# Part 2: Outfitter Allocation: Deer Tags



- Regular deer tags— sliding scale proposal covers highest reported use in 83 units
  - ✦ High use exceeds 50% of proposed NR limit in 9 units (Table 7)
  - ✦ 4 are backcountry units. Allocation proposed at 50% nonresident limit. Nonresident numbers not proposed for reduction
- White-tailed deer tags— sliding scale proposal covers highest reported use in 54 units
  - ✦ High use exceeds 50% of proposed NR limit in 7 units (Table 8)
  - ✦ 4 are backcountry units. Allocation proposed at 50% nonresident limit. Nonresident numbers not proposed for reduction

# Recommendations

- Part 1: Nonresident Tag Limits
  - Elk A/B Zones
  - Regular and White-tailed Deer Tags
- Part 2: Outfitter Tag Allocation
  - Elk A/ B Zones
  - Regular and White-tailed Deer Tags



# Part 1: Staff Recommendation



- **Nonresident Tag Limits – Elk**

Staff recommends the Commission adopt the sliding scale proposal to limit the proportion of nonresident elk tags in *uncapped* elk zone A and B tag hunts. **Staff are not recommending changes to capped zones.**

# Part 1: Staff Recommendation



- **Nonresident Tag Limits – Elk**
- In uncapped elk zone A and B tag hunts with nonresident participation of  $\geq 15\%$  during the previous 5 years, nonresident tags would be limited at 15% of the average number of hunters in the previous 5 years.
- In uncapped elk zone A and B tag hunts with nonresident participation of  $\geq 10\%$  but  $< 15\%$  during the previous 5 years, nonresident tags to be limited at 10% of the average number of hunters in the previous 5 years.
- In uncapped elk zone A and B tag hunts with NR participation of  $< 10\%$  during the previous 5 years, NR tags to be limited at 10% of the average number of hunters in the previous 5 years.

# Part 1: Staff Recommendation



## **Nonresident Tag Limits – Deer**

Staff recommends the Commission adopt the sliding scale proposal to limit the proportion of NR Regular Deer tags and NR White-tailed Deer tags by Unit.



# Part 1: Staff Recommendation



## **Nonresident Tag Limits – Deer**

- In Units with NR participation of  $\geq 15\%$  during the previous 5 years, NR tags to be limited at 15%.
- In Units with NR participation of  $\geq 10\%$  to  $< 15\%$  during the previous 5 years, NR tags to be limited at 10%.
- In Units with NR participation of  $< 10\%$  during the previous 5 years, NR tags to be limited at 10% of the average number of hunters in the previous 5 years.
- In backcountry units 7, 9, 10, 12, 16A, 17, 19, 20, 20A, 26, and 27, NR tags to be limited at status quo for previous 5 yr average % of NRs.

# Part 1: Staff Recommendation



## **Nonresident Tag Limits – Deer**

- *Each nonresident regular deer tag and each nonresident white-tailed deer tag would be valid only in one game management unit. Resident regular and white-tailed deer tags would still be valid in all units with an open hunt for that tag type.*

# Part 2: Staff Recommendation



## **Outfitter Tag Allocation**

Staff recommends the Commission allocate tags for use by clients of licensed outfitters as summarized below:

- Uncapped Elk Zone A and B tags - allocation of tags for use by outfitted clients would be based on the sliding scale proposal for managing the proportion of NR tags for uncapped elk zone A and B tags and the highest reported outfitter use in the previous 2 years. The highest reported use would be pro-rated at 58.8% because the high reported use exceeds number of available set-aside elk tags.
- A tags = 322; B tags = 160

## Part 2: Staff Recommendation



### **Outfitter Tag Allocation**

- Regular Deer Tags -- allocate tags for use by outfitted clients based on the sliding scale proposal for regular deer tags and the highest reported outfitted use in the last 2 years, as long as the highest use does not exceed 50% of total NR tags for that unit. In any unit where the highest outfitted use exceeds 50% of the number of NR tags, allocation would be set at 50% of the number of NR tags.

## Part 2: Staff Recommendation



### **Outfitter Tag Allocation**

- White-tailed Deer Tags -- allocate tags for use by outfitted clients based on the sliding scale proposal for white-tailed deer tags and the highest reported outfitted use in the last 2 years, as long as the highest use does not exceed 50% of the NR tags for that unit. In any unit where the highest outfitted use exceeds 50% of the number of NR tags available, allocation would be set at 50% of the NR tags.



# Suggested Motions





# Suggested Motions



## **Nonresident Tag Management**

- *That the Commission adopt staff recommendations for managing nonresident general season uncapped Elk Zone A and B tags and regular and white-tailed deer tags with a sliding scale to limit the proportion of nonresident participation by Elk Zone A or B tag and by game management unit for deer.*

# Suggested Motions



## **Outfitter Allocation for NR Elk Tags**

- *That the Commission adopt staff recommendations to allocate tags for use by outfitted hunters based on the sliding scale proposal for uncapped elk zone A and B tags and the highest reported outfitter use in the previous 2 years, pro-rated at 58.8%.*

# Suggested Motions



## **Outfitter Allocation for Nonresident Deer Tags**

- *That the Commission adopt staff recommendations to allocate tags for use by outfitted regular deer tag and white-tailed deer tag hunters based on the sliding scale proposal and the highest reported outfitted use in the last 2 years, as long as that use does not exceed 50% of the nonresident tags for that unit. In units where the highest outfitted use exceeds 50% of the nonresident tags available, allocation would be set at 50% of the nonresident tags.*